

DESTINATIONS

Destinations is the official newsletter of the Regional Public Transportation Authority.

Vol III Issue I, Winter 2000

START Here to Get There

Southwest Valley

Beginning January 10, 2000, a new bus route known as START, (Southwest Transportation and Regional Transit) will begin operations. This route has been made possible through a multi-agency partnership including the Federal Transit Administration, Maricopa County, the RPTA, and the communities of Avondale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, and Tolleson. As a compliment to the existing express bus service already available in the area, this route will enhance the mobility options of persons who live, work or play in the southwest valley area.

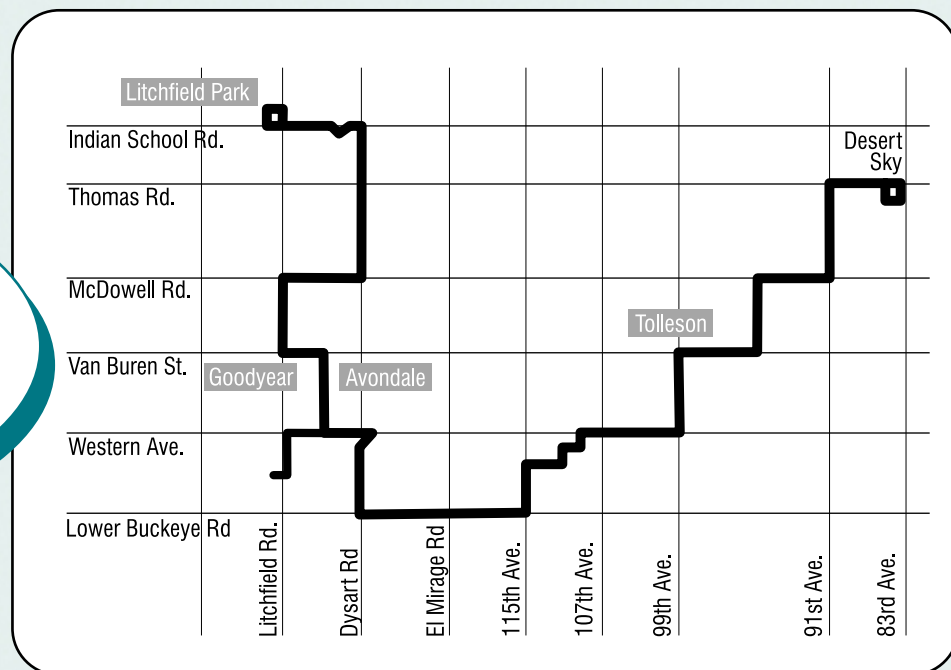
Buses are scheduled to operate Monday through Friday with frequencies ranging from 70 to 90 minutes. The route will provide service to many shopping and employment destinations along the route including Estrella Mountain Community

College and Desert Sky Mall where passengers will also have the opportunity to transfer to other regional bus routes.

To celebrate the introduction of this new bus route, the START partners will be hosting a variety of public events on Monday, January 24, including a news conference at Estrella Mountain Community College. To help get the new service off to a good start, free ride tickets will be distributed in the West Valley View newspaper and at various outlets along the route. Tickets will be valid from January 19 until February 15, 2000 and are good for one trip. For more information please call the Tri-City West Chamber of Commerce at (623) 932-2260. □



New START Bus Route



The new START bus provides a way for Southwest Valley residents to get to jobs, schools, and shopping Monday through Friday.



Ozone Program Receives Award

Susan Tierney, RPTA Marketing Coordinator, accepts an Honorable Mention award at the Arizona Clean and Beautiful Awards from Secretary of State Betsy Bayless for Governor Jane Dee Hull's Ozone Alert Program. The program was acknowledged for its innovative and inexpensive way to reduce the number of cars on the road during crucial times and its ability to benefit the community.



Secretary of State Betsy Bayless (left) and Susan Tierney, RPTA

Last summer's ozone program asked employers to reduce trips to the worksite by ten percent on High Pollution Advisory Days. The participation of more than 225 employers Valley-wide did help with averting any ozone violations and now the Valley area will apply for

Are you interested in the development of urban walking and biking paths?

"Creating An Off-street Path System in an Urban Environment"

This two-day seminar with national and regional experts will demonstrate how linked paths can help communities reduce traffic congestion, improve quality-of-life, and create a more livable community.

To receive a registration packet, please call Maureen DeCindis at Valley Metro (602) 534-1814 or e-mail mdecindis@vm.maricopa.gov



WALKING & BICYCLING into the 21st Century

Date: **April 25 & 26, 2000**
 Location: **Tempe Mission Palms Hotel**
 Cost: **\$88**



Sponsors of the seminar: ADOT, Federal Highway Administration, Maricopa Associations of Governments, and RPTA.

Destinations is available on audio tape and in braille. If you know of anyone who might be interested in receiving *Destinations* in either format, please call RPTA's Lillian Duarte at (602)534-1937. *Destinations* is the official newsletter of the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA). It is published with a circulation of approximately 6,000 copies. We welcome your letters, comments and suggestions.

The RPTA is a political subdivision of Arizona overseen by a ten-member board of elected officials, and was created by voters in 1985 with the passage of Proposition 300. Membership is open to all municipalities in Maricopa County and to the County government.

The mission of RPTA is to promote the social and economic well-being of the community through an efficient and effective regional transit system as a valued and significant component of the transportation network.

To receive future copies of *Destinations* please write or call:
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For more information visit our Web site:
www.valleymetro.maricopa.gov

10 Simple Steps to Improving Air Quality

- 1. Combine Trips.** When you first start a car after it has been sitting more than an hour, it pollutes up to five times more than when the engine's warm.
- 2. Share The Ride.** Carpool or ride the bus just once or twice a week. You can save time, money, and help reduce traffic congestion.
- 3. Try Two Wheels Instead Of Four.** Jump on your bike and ride down to the market instead of driving. It's good for both you and the air.
- 4. Take It In Stride.** Walk or in-line skate instead of starting the car. Get some exercise and save on gas.
- 5. Care For Your Car.** Regular maintenance, tune-ups, oil changes, and correct tire inflation can make your car run more efficiently.
- 6. Unpack The Trunk.** Your car will operate more efficiently if you have a lighter load.
- 7. Don't Top Off The Tank.** It releases gas fumes into the air and cancels the benefits of the pump's anti-pollution devices.
- 8. Work From Home.** Gather up your work and stay home tomorrow, especially if there is a high pollution advisory in effect.
- 9. Get The Scoop.** For state-wide traffic advisory information call 1(888)411-ROAD or for the most up-to-the minute traffic information visit the ADOT website at: <http://www.dot.state.az.us>
- 10. Spread The Word.** Share this information with neighbors and friends. A little effort goes a long way. □



Funding Provides New Bus Service



New Service

As the Valley continues to grow at a rapid pace, so does the congestion on local streets and regional freeways. Since population and job growth are expected to double in the next 25 years and freeways won't be as free flowing, having a viable public transit system will be crucial to the area's mobility. That system should include an element of rapid mass transit and additional bus service to continue the desired lifestyle that many long for when they move to the Valley.

In the past two years, many of the Valley Metro bus service enhancements that have occurred are due to the successful tax initiatives in Tempe and Mesa. Then, in 1998, the state lawmakers approved legislation that designated a portion of the vehicle license tax revenues to cities, towns, and counties throughout Arizona. All of these have helped pick up the slack where improvements were needed most desperately.

Last November the city of Glendale received much-needed trips on the weekday service for Route 170-Bell Rd. and the addition of Saturday service on 59th Ave. The new START route, in the southwest valley, was also made possible by special funding via federal

grants, RPTA, and local cities.

The following are highlights from the package of service improvements beginning in March.

- ! Extend Saturday service on Routes 7 and 8 to match weekday service.
- ! Combine Routes 30 and 31 on University Dr. and Routes 45 and 46 on Broadway.
- ! Implement Saturday service in Glendale on Route 60-Bethany Home Rd.
- ! Implement new Route 65 on Mill/Kyrene between downtown Tempe along Mill Ave. and Kyrene Rd. to provide 15-minute service combined with Route 66.
- ! Implement hourly service on Route 77 on Baseline between 48th St. and 39th Ave. to Caesar Chavez High School Monday through Saturday.
- ! Extend Route 124 to serve Corona Del Sol High School and 48th St. and Ray Rd. at the large shopping complex.
- ! Extend Route 170 east to Hayden Rd. in Scottsdale (weekdays only).
- ! Extend Route 186 to Arrowhead Towne Center.
- ! Implement a new neighborhood circulator in Tempe. □

VM Saves Costs With New Van Plan

Vanpools

We want to seek alternatives to keep the cost of operating and riding in vans affordable for our riders.

Gary Roberts, RPTA Vanpool Specialist



*Making the van purchase possible are (from left):
RPTA Director **Ken Driggs**;
Dennis Middlestedt, Planning and Research Engineer,
Robert Hollis, Division Administrator,
USDOT Federal Highway Administration;
Tempe Mayor **Neil Guiliano**;
Mesa Mayor **Wayne Brown**.*

The newest fifteen passenger vans are now being purchased by Valley Metro with special funding through Federal Highway Administration's CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program) funds. CMAQ funding comes to Valley Metro from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). By the beginning of the year, these new vans will replace all of the existing 15-passenger vans once leased from the contracted vendor, VPSI. Eventually all the Valley Metro (VM) vanpool vans that you see traversing in and out of the Valley will be under VM ownership. And they will be sporting an updated paint scheme.

Valley Metro currently has 158 vanpools that are being used by Valley employees to commute back and forth to worksites. □

For more information about Valley Metro vanpools, call Gary Roberts at (602)534-1808.

The City by City page provides regional updates from the various transit agencies associated with the RPTA.

Glendale

Transit Issues Important to City of Glendale Voters

Glendale residents recently demonstrated their strong support for improving and expanding citywide transit services in the city's November 2 bond election. Voters overwhelmingly approved a \$6.9 million bond authorization that will allow Glendale to upgrade and expand transit services, park-and-ride facilities, and passenger amenities over the next ten to 15 years. Bond financing will also enable the city to replace existing transit buses, cars, and computer equipment.

Voters approved the proposition by nearly a 3-1 margin (72 percent to 28 percent) and also said yes to 11 other bonds totaling \$411.5 million. The strong support for the transit proposition in particular is evidence that transportation is an important quality of life issue to residents, said Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs. "I was surprised at how high transit came in. In some polling places, the transit proposition received 85 percent approval. That's quite an interesting statement," Scruggs said. □

Phoenix

Transit 2000 Web Site

Phoenix is a world-class city in the areas of technology, economic development, and culture. However, when it comes to supplying basic public transit, Phoenix continues to lag far behind other major U.S. cities. Did you know, for example, that Phoenix is the largest city in the world that does not provide bus service on Sundays?

To better meet the transportation needs of city and Valley residents, Phoenix citizens have been working on a plan that will improve and expand the city's public transit system. Now there is a Web site dedicated to ushering that system into the new millennium: www.transit2000.org.

At the site, you can learn about the various elements of the Transit 2000 plan and how citizens will benefit from each of them. You can also keep informed about upcoming meetings, offer your input, and add your name to the Transit 2000 e-mail list. Visiting the site is a great way to become more involved in the city's upcoming transit referendum that is scheduled to appear before the voters on March 14, 2000. □

Deer Valley Park-and-Ride

The future Deer Valley Park-and-Ride is located on a 5.5-acre site on the southwest corner of the Bell Rd. and Interstate 17 interchange. The site, which is in a highly visible and well-trafficked area, will provide express buses with direct access to the freeway by utilizing a frontage road bus staging area and an HOV bypass ramp integrated into the interchange design by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). This design feature will minimize bus diversion and in doing so provide increased efficiency for transit operations.

The initial development phase is scheduled for completion by April 2000, shortly after which the facility will become operational. The Deer Valley Park-and-Ride will include approximately 240 parking spaces (100 of which will be shaded), a convenient waiting area, and other passenger amenities. The facility can be expanded to 400 spaces in the future to accommodate increased demand. Funding for the project comes from a variety of sources through a partnership established by the city of Phoenix, ADOT, Maricopa County, and the Federal Transit Administration. □



New Buses Are an Early Holiday Gift

In December, the city of Phoenix took delivery of 35 new buses powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG). The new, 40-foot buses are designed for low-floor boarding. In addition, the city has ordered 31 new articulated buses and ten 45-foot, light-weight composite buses, with delivery starting in late 2000 or early 2001. (All of these buses are also LNG-powered and have low-floor designs.) The added length of the 45-foot buses makes it possible to carry more passengers, and their high-strength, light-weight construction significantly reduces fuel consumption and emissions while increasing brake lining and tire life. All 76 LNG buses will replace older model, diesel-powered buses. They will bring the total number of LNG buses in the Phoenix fleet to 226. □

Scottsdale

New Scottsdale Airpark Routes

In August 2000, the city of Scottsdale will inaugurate three new routes that will provide service to the Scottsdale Airpark. The Airpark is the third largest employment center in Maricopa County. There are currently 23,000 people working in the Airpark area, and that number is expected to increase to 50,000 by the year 2020. Studies have shown that the majority of Airpark employees live in either northeast Phoenix or Scottsdale's Horizon Park neighborhood, roughly centered on Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd. and Thompson Peak Rd.

The three new routes will help to alleviate traffic congestion and air pollution around the Airpark. An express route will carry passengers between the Paradise Valley Mall Transit Center and the Airpark during the morning and evening peak travel hours. A circulator will provide service within the Airpark, with headways of approximately ten minutes. The third route will be a local route providing service between the Horizon Park area and the Airpark and offering connections to Route 94. □

Tempe

High School Bus Pass Program

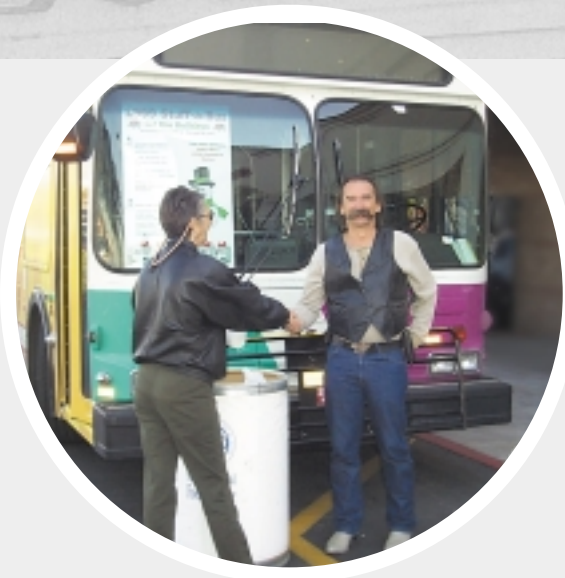
The city of Tempe has implemented a new, student bus pass program for two schools in the Tempe Union High School District (TUHSD). The pilot program will help the schools reduce their dependency on traditional yellow school buses while introducing teenagers to the public transit system. Launched in January 2000, the program is a joint undertaking of the city of Tempe and the TUHSD board, staff, students, and administrators. Transit staff and school administrators will oversee the program. For more information, please call the city of Tempe transit office at (480) 350-2739. □



Valley

1999 Stuff-a-Bus Holiday Food Drive

Valley Metro teamed up with two new sponsors for the fifth annual Stuff-a-Bus holiday food drive, which took place December 9-12. Together with KPNX Channel 12 and Bashas' Markets, Valley Metro helped to raise thousands of pounds of non-perishable food for less fortunate members of our community. A full-painted advertising bus was parked at four different Bashas' store locations to accept the donations. Valley Metro staff volunteered to man the sites from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day of the drive. On Monday, December 13, 10,000 pounds of food collected from the event was donated to St. Vincent de Paul for distribution. □



Bus Operator Mark Meyer accepts a food donation at one of the local Bashas' stores in an effort to "Stuff-a-Bus" full of canned and dry goods.



More than 1,000 bike riders pedaled their way around Tempe in the fourth annual Tour de Tempe last October. The "Tour" is a 15-mile ride that showcases the city's finest bikeways. Sighted on the community ride were Mayor Neil Guiliano and Vice-Mayor Ben Arredondo, along with other members of the Tempe city council.

Task Force Envisions State's Transportation Future

Almost one year ago, Governor Jane Dee Hull signed an executive order creating the Governor's Transportation Vision 21 Task Force. In the executive order, the Governor recognized that an adequate statewide transportation system is crucial to the growth and economic vitality of the state. Arizona's transportation system of the future could not be limited to just roadways, but it was determined it should be a fully integrated multi-modal system with a range of alternative transportation options.

The task force, which is co-chaired by Martin Shultz, Vice President, Government Affairs at Pinnacle West Capital Corporation and Dr. Sharon Megdal, President, MegEcon Consulting, is responsible for identifying critical transportation needs statewide.



www.dot.state.az.us/about/vision21

They will recommend planning approaches and funding strategies for implementing a multi-modal transportation system to meet future demands. In addition, they will evaluate the roles and responsibilities of state and local agencies in providing transportation.

Meetings and statewide public forums have been ongoing since last March. Representatives from regional transportation planning agencies have briefed the task force. RPTA staff will continue to be involved in the planning process to ensure that transit issues receive the broadest possible consideration. In

2000, the group will continue with an active public involvement process, focusing on review of upcoming draft plan documents.

For additional information on the task force, including a meeting schedule, check out their Web site at: www.dot.state.az.us/about/vision21. □

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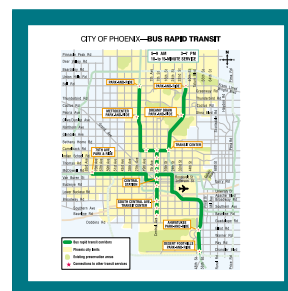
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